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Indian Mines Act — working 1947 — Review

166/A1/48: Dated, 25-7-1948.

To
The Secretary to Government,
Development Department
Madras.

Sir,

Sub: Statistics - Mines - Indian Mines Act - Working of - During 1947 - Review - submitted.

I submit my review of the reports and returns received from the Collectors on the working of the Mines in the Province of Madras during the year 1947. A statement showing the average number of persons employed in the Mines and the average rate of wages paid to them is enclosed. Mining was carried on in the districts of Ananthapur, Bellary, Chinglepet, Chittoor, Chinglepet, Coimbatore, Cuddapah, Guntur, East Godaveri, Kistna, Kurnool, Madura, Malabar, Nellore, Nilgiris, Salem, Trichy and Vizagapatam. In Ananthapur, Barytes and Steatite were mined. In Bellary, red oxide of iron was recovered. In Chinglepet, the stone quarries of the Madras Corporation and the Madras Port Trust were worked during the year. In Chittoor, a small quantity of gold was recovered. In Coimbatore, limestone was quarried. In Cuddapah, barytes and chin, clay were mined. In Guntur, limestone was quarried. In East Godaveri graphite was produced. In Kistna stone was quarried. In Kurnool, barytes and yellow ochre were mined. In Malabar china clay was recovered. In Madura, mica was mined. In Nellore, mica, steatite, china clay, gypsum, lime shell and yellow ochre were recovered. In the Nilgiris, mica was recovered in the following mines:

1. Gopalakrishna Mica Mines.
2. Lakshmikumara Mica Mines.
3. New Hope Mines; and
4. K.Chamber's Mica Mines.

In Salem, The Magnesite Mines at Salem Junction were worked by the Magnesite Syndicate Ltd., London, the mines at Kurlampatti by the Salem Magnesite Ltd.; the mine at Kanjanur by S.Rajarathnam Chettair of Bangalore; the mines in Chettichavadi Jagir by the Magnesite Corporation of India Ltd. Trichy; the mines at Periasoragai by V.Nimbkar of Bombay; the Shevaroy Bauxite Mines by Shevaroy Bauxite Products Ltd., Yercaud; the Sithambudi Corundrum Mines by V.Nimbkar of Bombay and Messrs.Ajax Products Ltd. The lessee of the Seerapalli Magnesite Mines, viz., The Prithvi Mines Syndicate Ltd., did not commence operations. There was no production in the Seethampudi Corundum Mines worked by V.Nimbkar of Bombay and Messrs.Ajax Products Ltd. closed their mines from 31-10-46. In Tiruchirrapalli district, the Trichy Nodules Mines and the Trichy Mining Works Ltd recovered gypsum and phosphatic nodules and Sri Sankara Iyer, the Fertilizer and Chemicals (Travancore) Ltd. and Govindan Pillai recovered gypsum. The Dalmia Cement Co.Ltd produced gypsum and limestone and Messrs.Parry & Co. felspar. In Vizagapatam district, Sri Gopalakrishna Mining Co. was working at Kasibuga Mica Mine and Sri Vijayaramamurthi, the mica mines at Cherlopolem and Narendrapuram. There was no output of mangenese and dressed mica in the district.

The statement below shows the output of minerals in the various districts during the last five years

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The output of barytes in Kurnool rose from 1174 tons in 1946 to 2128½ tons in 1947 whilst the output in Anantapur and Cuddapah fell from tons 4894-29-1bs and 5635 tons to tons 1921-18 and 1087 tons respectively. There was a decrease

n the output of bauxite in Salem from Tons1662-13 lbs n 1946 to Tons 1396-28 lbs in 1947. The output of hina clay in Nellore District rose from 30 tons in 946 to 197½ tons in 1947. There was a production of hina clay of 1501½ tons in Malabar and 2725 tons in uddapah in 1947 as against nil during the previous ear. There was a rise in the recovery of felspar in he Tiruchirrapalli district from 82 tons in 1946 to tons 28-9 lbs in 1947. In the same district Tons 22838-10 lbs f gypsum was recovered in 1947 as against Tons 15096-16 lbs n the previous year and in Nellore 412 as against 205 tons. n Salem district the recovery of magnesite was 51672½ tons n 1947 as against Tons 43628-10 during the previous year. 7483½ lbs. and 1645 tons-1695 lbs of mica were produced n the Nilgiris and Nellore districts respectively as against 3 tons-11cwts-93½ lbs and Tons1678-54 lbs. during the year 1946. A small quantity of about 64 lbs. of mica was mined in Madura. The output of phosphatic nodules in Tiruchirrapalli district during the year under review was Tons 853-5 as against 243 tons during the previous year. 836½ tons of red oxide of iron were produced in Bellary in 1947 as against 1764 tons during the previous year. The output of steatite in Nellore and Anantapur districts was 15467 seers and nil respectively in the previous year. The production of stones in Chinglepet was 56016 tons in 1947 as against 62147 during 1946. The output in Kistna district was 38380 tons as against 11575 tons during 1946. The production of limestone in Trichy, Guntur and Coimbatore was 99106 tons, Tons 97334-16 and 1,59,217 tons in 1947 respectively as against 95860, 125943-26lbs and 1,74,390-19 lbs during the previous year. The production of limeshell in Nellore district decreased from 850 tons in 1946 to 700 tons in 1947 and gold in Chittoor from 56.3 oz. in 1946 to 7.14 oz. in 1947. 921½ tons of yellow ochre were produced in Kurnool district in 1947 as against 61 tons in 1946. Nellore produced 40 tons of yellow ochre this year. There was a production of 25 lbs of graphite in East Godavera district.

Inspection of Mines: The mines in Nilgiris district were inspected by the Health Staff and occasionally by the officers of the Mica Department. In Nellore district, the Junior Inspector of Mines, Government of India made an elaborate inspection of the mines. The Junior Labour Inspector of Mines also visited the mines in the district. The District Health Officer, Nellore inspected 22 mines and the Collector 3 mines. The Mica Executive Staff regularly inspected the mines during the year. The tahsildar Coimbatore inspected the Associated Cement Co. mines during the year. In Cuddapah district, the mines were not inspected during the year under review. The District Health Officer inspected the mines in the Bellary district. In Salem district the mines owned by the Magnesite Syndicate Ltd., Salem were inspected by the Tahsildar, Salem, Revenue Divisional Officer, Salem, and District Health Officer, Salem; the Chettichavadi Jagir mines by the Tahsildar, Salem and the Revenue Divisional Officer, Salem; The Kurumbapatti Magnesite mines by the Tahsildar, Omalur and the District Health Officer, Salem; the Kanjahur Magnesite Mine by the Deputy Tahsildar, Uppangarai and the Shevaroys Bauxite Mines by the Deputy Tahsildar, Yercaud and Revenue Divisional Officer, Salem. No mines in the Kurnool district were inspected by the District Health Officer during the year. The District Health Officer, Vizagapatam has not inspected any of the mines in the district. The District Health Officer, Chicacole did not inspect the magnesite mines at Kodur and Garbhan as they were closed.

Supply of Labour. There was generally no difficulty in securing adequate labour in Nellore district where there was dearth of skilled labour. In Nilgiris a male labourer was paid on an average As.1-10-0 per day and a female labourer As.1/-. In Ananthapur a male labourer was paid on an average Re1/- per day and a female As.12/- in the Madras Port Trust Stone Quarry in Chinglepet district a male labourer was paid Re1/- on an average per day. In Madura male labourers were paid As.1/8/- per day on

a skilled underground labourer was paid from Rs.1/- to Rs.1/10/- and an unskilled labourer from As.10/- to Re.1/4/-. Male factory labourers were paid from As.8/- to Rs.1/4/- and a woman labourer from As.8/- from to As.14/-. In Guntur district male labourers were paid on an average Rs.1-6-6 per day and female labourer Rs.1-4-3 The wage for male factory labourer in Coimbatore was Rs.1-13-0 and for female labourer Rs-1-10-0 on an average. In the quarry the average wage for a man was Rs.1-10-3 per day and for a female labourer Rs.1-5-6. In Cuddapah district, the average daily wages for a male and female labourer was As.13 and As9/ respectively. In Bellary district, the daily average rate paid to a male labourer was Rs.1/- and for a female labourer Rs.0-7-6. In Malabar male labourers were paid Rs.1-6-0 and female labourers Rs.0-10-0 per day. In Trichy district, quarrying is let on contract in the areas leased to the Trichy Mining Works Ltd. and the Dalmia Cement Co. Ltd. and the wages are paid at the turn over basis at fixed rates; generally a male labourer does a turn over of Rs.1-0-3 to Rs.2-2-0 per day and a female labourer from Rs.0-9-4 to Rs.0-14-10 a day. In Salem the daily average rates of wages paid to the male labourers in Manganesite Mines were Rs.1-3-3 and female labourers As.13/6 whilst in the Bauxite Mines, they were paid Rs.1-14-10 and As.10 respectively. In Kurnool the daily rate of wages paid ranged from As.12 to Rs.1-4-0 in the case of male labourer and from As.8 to Re.1 in the case of female labourer. In the Vijayalakshmi Mica Mines in Vizagapatam male labourers were paid Rs.2/8/- per day on an average. In East Godaveri male labourers were paid Rs.1-40- and females Rs.0-12-0 per day. In Kistna district labourers were paid Rs.1-4-0 per day and females Rs1/-

Relations between Buyers and Workers. The relations between the labourers and the employers continued to be generally satisfactroy. There was an agitation by the quarry workers in Coimbatore district for the abolition of the contract system and on the recommendations of the adjudicator, the Government advised the Management to abolish the system in a reasonable length of time. On account of the failure of the management to implement theaward, the quarry workers struck work on 9-12-1946. For want of raw materials, the company closed down the factory on 5-1-1947 after giving 2 days notice. Finally the Government were able to effect a settlement and work was resumed on 12-2-47. In Cuddapah district, there was a strike in Messrs. Tiffin & Co. mines and this has been amicably settled.

General Health of Workers. General health of workers continue to be satisfactory. There was a first aid post attached to the Madras Port Trust Stone Quarry at Pallavaram in charge of a qualifi First Aider. The dispensary attached to the Madras Corporation Stone Quarry at Pallavaram is doing useful work. A creche attached to the dispensary. In Nellore district, though the health of the coolies was fair, malaria is not extinct. The medical relief by way of first aid afforded by the management of the mines does not help the labourers appreciably. First aid equipment is available in almost all the mines. All cases of minor accidents are being attended to at the mines by those qualified to render first aid services. Serious cases are sent to the hospitals nearby. The need for hospitals with maternity facilities is keenly felt. In Coimbatore, there is a well equipped dispensary in charge of a qualified doctor, which gives free medical aid to all kinds of labourers and families. There is a recreation club with a library with provision for indoor and outdoor games. Medicine chest, bandages and plasters are available with the agent of the Trichy Mining Works, Trichy. The Magnesite Syndicate Ltd. Salem Junction has appointed a full time medical officer in charge of the dispensary.

Sanitation & Accommodation. In Nilgiris district every mine is provided with latrines which are kept clean. Drinking water is available in all the mines. In Anantapur district, necessary sanitary arrangements have been made according to the directions of the District Health Officer. There is no housing accommodation at the work spot. Labourers who come from the neighbouring villages get

back to their villages after the day's work is over. In the Madras Port Trust Stone Quarry, the children of the workers are not taken proper care of. No housing accommodation has been provided and no house rent is paid. Sanitation is fair. In the Madras Corporation Stone Quarry at Pallavaram no housing accommodation is provided to labourers, but house rent allowance of Rs.2/- is paid. Being a village, there is no difficulty for accommodation. Sanitation is good. In Nellor district, the housing conditions and sanitation have not improved. Though the mine owners were asked by the District Health Officer to construct flush-out latrines, no mine has been provided with them. Bore hole latrines are provided at all the big mines. In some cases, these latrines are also said to be in need of repairs. Drinking water is genera supplied in cement cisterns with taps at the big mines and in earthen pots and tumblers in small mines. The District Health Officer advised that the drinking water should be stored in earthen casks closed with lid and fitted with a tap Except in a few mines where electricity is provided, the other mines are using candles. Ventilation is not satisfacto generally due to the unsystematic workings which block up fre circulation of air. In Coimbatore district, most of the essential workers are provided with house accommodation. A ten year scheme to house all the employees has been formulated by the Associated Cement Co. Ltd. Free quarters are being given for the quarry labourers. The medical officer is in charge of the health and sanitation of the colony. In Cuddapah no housing accommodation has been provided as labourers come mostly from the neighbouring villages. Sheds for the workers for mid-day meal and for short rest have been provided by the majority of the mine owners. In Bellary district, sheds for living and trench latrines should be put up. In Trichy district the labourers working in the limestone quarries of Kallakudi have been provided with comfortable sheds with electric lights. Arrangements have also been made for the supply of drinking water at convenient places. In Salem, the Magnesite Mines at Salem Junction has provided bore hole latrines for the labourers. A tiffin shed has been provided for the labourers. In several of the mining areas, workers who come from neighbouring villages, return home in the evenings.

Prices of foodstuffs, clothing, etc. Prices of foodstuffs and clothing continued to be high. The labourersb in the Nilgiris district get their rations from the bazars at Cherampadi and Pandalur. In the Madras Port Trust Stone Quarry, Pallavaram no arrangements have been made for supplying foodstuffs and clothing. One set of clothing is said to be supplied free on Pongal days. In the Madras Corporation stone quarry, Pallavaram there is a cooperative store where foodstuffs (except rice) and clothing are supplied at reasonable rates to the labourers. Two sets of clothing are supplied every year. In Coimbatore, there is a grain shop attached to the works where all labourers can purchase foodstuffs and other household necessities. The Magnesite Syndicate Ltd.. Salem, is running a grain shop for its labourers.

Education. In the Nilgiris district no schools are provided by the mines. There are two District Board schools near the mines, and the school going children attend these schools. In the Madras Corporation Stone Quarry at Pallavaram, there is a proposal to open a school by the Corporation In Nellore district, there is a school at Sudharsana Rama Mine at Talapur, which is not working satisfactorily. The children have to go to the schools run by the District Boards away from the mica mines. In Coimbatore, there is a recognised higher elementary school run by the company. In Tiruchirrapalli district, Dalmia Cement Co. Ltd. is running a free school at Kallakudi.

Liquor Consumption & Control. In Trichy district, almost all the labourers working in limestone quarries were taking arrack, but after the introduction of Prohibition, this has been stopped. In most of the other districts, there is no liquor consumption due to prohibition.

Crime & Moral Conditions. The moral condition in general was satisfactory. In Nellore district, the morality of the labourers class has not improved. Pilfering of mica is on the increase.

Accidents. In Chinglepet district, in the Madras Port Trust Quarry, there were no major accidents, but 21 minor accidents occurred. In the Madras Corporation Stone Quarry at Pallavaram, there were 5 major accidents and the workmen in all these cases rejoined duty after treatment. There were 1084 minor accidents. In Nellore district, there were 6 major accidents during the year. Owing to the fall of a pipe in Venkataramana Mine one labourer sustained injuries to his fingers of his right hand. Due to the sudden delayed explosion of a misfired explosive in the Parvati Mica Mine, one labourer died and two others were injured. One labourer was injured in his eye during the shanking of iron bars in the S.A.A.L.M.Mine at Talapur. In the Palamani Mine, due to the misfiring of the explosive one of the labourers lost his left hand up to his wrist and another received light injuries. One worker died and 3 others were injured when a misfired explosive exploded in Pallimita mine and a cooly was injured in his face and thigh in Rajulacheruvu mine owing to the fall of a roof and an old tunnel. All these cases were enquired into and action taken. In Coimbatore there were some minor accidents.

Prosecution for Offences. In Nellore district, the manager of Tellabedu mine was prosecuted for having illicitly stored explosives in the mine premises. The accused was sentenced to pay a fine of Rs.200/-. The manager of Harinath Gopal mine was prosecuted for irregular maintenance of records. The manager of Seetharam mines was prosecuted for having illicitly blasted explosives. The lessee and manager of Venkataroma Mine was prosecuted for non-submission of accident intimation. These cases are pending with the Court

General. In the Nellore district there is only one depot which supplies explosives to the mines which are scattered over the district. The present depot is located at Sydapuram in one corner of the mica zone and miners are feeling difficulty in getting explosives. There are non-royalty areas in this district where there is no regular system of consignment. The mica executive staff has no control over the mica produced in that area and there is every possibility of some of the mica produced in royalty areas being mixed up with that of non-royalty mines to escape taxation. The underground surveyor and his staff appointed during the end of 1944 continued throughout the year.

13 lbs. of Gelignite, 2½ lbs. of gelatine and 92 detonators were used in the South Kolar Gold mines Ltd., Chittoor. In Tiruchirrapalli district 16,888 lbs. of country gun powder and 2798 coils of detonators were used. 61,305 lbs. of country gun powder were used during the year in the magnesite mine at Salem Junction and Chettichavadi jagir.

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